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S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE OPENING

OF THE

INDEPENDENT CHAPEL

IN B A T H,

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1789.

By the REV. WILLIAM JAY.

FOR WE ARE THE CIRCUMCISION WHICH WORSHIP GOD
IN THE SPIRIT, AND REJOICE IN CHRIST JESUS, AND
HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN THE FLESH,

PHILIPPIANS iii. 3.

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S E R M O N, &c.

JOHN IV. 21 and 23.

JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, WOMAN, BELIEVE ME, THE HOUR COMETH WHEN YE SHALL NEITHER IN THIS MOUNTAIN, NOR YET AT JERUSALEM WORSHIP THE FATHER.—BUT THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE TRUE WORSHIPPERS SHALL WORSHIP THE FATHER IN SPIRIT, AND IN TRUTH: FOR THE FATHER SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM.

TO man, had he remained in his original perfection, the whole globe would have been a temple; every pebble, every star a preacher; and a spiritual thankful heart

would have made him ready and constant in the service of his God. But man depraved by sin, and involved in corruption,—prone to evil and backward to good, wants his mind to be stir'd up by way of remembrance, and needs exhortations to pursue his duty and interest. His heart must be touched through the medium of sense, and his concern with things spiritual and eternal be preserved by those which are seen and temporal. He wants seasons, and forms, and places of worship, and “God who is rich in mercy” and “knows our frame” has ordained such “to which we do well to take heed.”

The tendency there is in man to subvert the ordinances of God, is evident, and lamentable. The exemplification of it, makes a very considerable part of sacred history; and leads us to perceive, that 'tis much easier to degenerate into idolatry, than to preserve that spirituality which is essential to right worship. Should the object of our regard be the “only wise and true God,” yet the want of wisdom and truth in our hidden
part

part cannot be compensated by the applause of the world, the splendor of the edifice, the grandeur of the congregation, or the pageantry of the performance. This consideration escapes us in common, or we do not pay that regard to it which the importance of it demands. Suitably impressed with it, we shall contemplate our religious liberty with gratitude ; and use this house erected for the purpose of sacred exercise, in such a manner as to approve ourselves in *their* number who “ worship the Father in spirit and in truth,”

Presuming the subject is proper for this occasion, we shall gradually enter upon it by remarking a few previous occurrences recorded in the chapter before us.

The connection of events which, correspondent with the eternal purposes, regulated our Lord's determination, and movement from place to place, required that “ he “ must needs go through Samaria.” “ He “ cometh therefore to a city called Sychar” famous for a well, which being originally

the property of Jacob was venerated. It afforded a convenient seat, and refreshing water. Jesus wearied with his journey, and the heat of high noon, "sat down on the well while his disciples went to buy food"—In no better way could *he* be accommodated who enriched the earth with his bounty, and was made so popular by his miracles of grace! A woman coming in the juncture of time to draw water, Jesus asked drink to her no small surprize, since all amicable intercourse had long been closed between the Jews, and Samaritans. The request opened a way for conversation, which led to such discoveries as excited the attention, and proved the conversion of many of the city. A controversy had long subsisted between the Jews, and Samaritans, respecting the proper place of divine worship. The poor woman thinking herself interested in it—perceiving Christ was a prophet—and desiring to know his opinion—began the subject. Circumscribed in her knowledge, and misled by tradition; she was ignorant of the spring of the dispute, and concluded their's was

was the only proper local worship.—“ Our
 “ fathers worshiped in this mountain, and ye
 “ say in Jerusalem is the place where men
 “ ought to worship.” To this Jesus replies,
 “ Woman, believe me, the hour cometh,
 “ when ye shall neither in this mountain nor
 “ yet at Jerusalem (exclusively) worship the
 “ Father:” and informs her that the worship
 of God was to be general, and of a nature
 with *him* who is a Spirit, and requires us to
 worship him in spirit and in truth. Let us
 then enquire—what is the notion of worship
 here intended—how we are concerned in
 our public assemblies to support it—what
 are the properties of the object of it—and
 the advantages we derive from them?

I. The term worship is certainly intended
 to represent that part of our holy religion,
 by which we profess the inward frame in the
 outward act, or the influence of the mind
 by the “bodily exercise.” It includes an
 expression of adoration, prayer, and praise.
 If we take the definition of worship from

the Hebrew word* we find it is the act whereby a man falls prostrate on the ground. This was the profoundest expression of civil or sacred adoration of old ; and 'tis in the eastern countries to this day. The import of the Greek word† is much the same, signifying veneration by the bending of the body, or adoration by an exterior humble gesture. As when a man casts himself down at the feet of a superior, and the metaphor is taken from the manner of spaniels crouching at their master's feet. It instructs us concerning God, and ourselves, and the disproportion there is between us,

“ God is great, and we know him not,
 “ He is the high and lofty One that inhabit-
 “ eth eternity, and dwells in that light
 “ to which no man can approach. The
 “ world is his and the fulness thereof. All
 “ things were made by him, and for him.
 “ He sitteth upon the circle of the earth,
 “ and the inhabitants thereof are as grass-
 “hoppers

* שָׁח.

† προσκυνω.

“hoppers before him; the nations are as a
 “drop in the bucket, and as the small dust
 “in the ballance. He is the King im-
 “mortal, invisable, the same yesterday, to-
 “day, and for ever.—But man’s founda-
 “tion is in the dust. He dwells in houses
 “of clay. His breath is in his nostrils. He
 “is crushed before the moth. What is man
 “that the Lord should be mindful of him?
 “Can he be profitable unto God? Or can his
 “goodness extend unto him? If his trans-
 “gressions are multiplied, what doth he un-
 “to him? If he is righteous what doth the
 “Lord receive from him?—Behold God is
 “glorious in holiness, and hath no pleasure
 “in wickedness. He hateth all the workers
 “of iniquity. But what is man that he
 “should be clean, or he that is born of a wo-
 “man that he should be righteous? All have
 “sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

God then is not to be trifled with by such
 a worm, much less such a sinful worm as man,
 Adoration is his native right, and in render-
 ing him what is his due, we should be deeply
 impressed

impressed with a sense of his divine majesty. The holier men are, the more of his glory will they discover, and the lower they will lie before him. Ignorance and sin may excite freedom and irreverence; but angels who are most wise and holy, are very sensible of their distance and inferiority—bow before his throne—and veil their faces with their wings when they approach their adorable Lord.

It being nearly impossible to imprint awe on the affections, without suitable notions of the divine perfections; we are led in our present imperfect state to consider them in their effects, or manifested to our sense and reason. Glorious descriptions of God are common in his word. The mind being bounded by sense, and conversant about temporal objects, is incapable of forming conceptions of the majesty of God, without having reference to worldly grandeur. We are enabled to perceive something of that which is divine, by that which is human; and hence in allusion to royalty we read of
the

the cloathing, the throne, the attendants of God. But since "none can find out the "Almighty to perfection" descriptions of his majesty are not confined to the display of earth, but are embellished with imagery which the world cannot produce, and which elevates the mind to the refulgence of glory. To this gave the prophet witness—"I saw "the Lord sitting upon his throne, high and "lifted up, and his train filled the temple. "Above it stood the seraphims : each had "six wings; with twain he covered his face, "with twain he covered his feet, and with "twain he did fly. And one cried unto "another and said, holy, holy, holy is the "Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of "his glory.* "Cloathed with light as with "a garment." surrounded with inconceivable glories, while worlds roll at the foot of his throne; he sits to receive the worship of his creatures.

To worship the Creator by adoration and homage, was originally man's principal work;

* Isaiah vi, 1, 2, 3.

work ; but tis now connected with prayer—for mercy, because we are sinners—pardon, for we are guilty—holiness, for we are unclean—happiness, for we are miserable. And to whom then shall we go but to the God of salvation ? He “ can supply all our “ need from his riches in glory by Christ “ Jesus,” and it becomes us humbly “ with “ prayer and supplication to make known “ our requests unto God.”

Thanksgiving for blessings becomes a part of the worship due unto his name. That which merits our prayer certainly deserves our praise. Creation, providence and grace, yield constant matter for our gratitude ; and a proper sense of the divine goodness will enable us to say from our heart—“ bless “ the Lord O my soul, and all that is within “ me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord O “ my soul, and forget not all his benefits.” As we acquire a recollection of his favors, our praise will extend with a swell of gratitude, producing the profoundest regard, suited to the nature and extent of the subject.

With

With a view to this sacred exercise, public assemblies are to be convened. The worship of God is a joint concern, and men being equally, and mutually interested in it, public places have generally been erected for the more convenient solemnization of it. By immediate appointment and direction first the tabernacle, and then the temple under the law were reared; and in succeeding times such houses as this, in which we are now met, were built by the common consent of holy men who “every where pray, lifting “up holy hands,” “and are agreed touching “the things they should ask.”

As the end of our religious worship should ever be kept in view, we proceed to observe,

II. That if we are concerned to support it in our public assemblies—we shall not subvert the divine appointment—we shall regard the object in the act—and preserve spirituality in our frame.

1. Worship is the appointment of God. By a command relative to it he strengthens the prohibition of idolatry, saying to Israel,
“mine

“ mine angel shall go before thee, and
 “ bring thee into the Amorites, the Hittites,
 “ and the Perezites, and the Canaanites, and
 “ the Hivites, and the Jebusites ; and I will
 “ cut them off ; thou shalt not bow down to
 “ their Gods, nor serve them, nor do after
 “ their works. Ye shall serve the Lord your
 “ God, and he shall bless thy bread and thy
 “ water.”*

In the subsequent chapter, God calls Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel to worship. It was enjoined upon the Jews previous to their entrance into the promised land that they should “ worship the Lord their God, and him only they should serve ;” and after their settlement the worship of God in one way or another was frequently inculcated. Being established by divine institution David resolves to comply with it ; “ but as for me,
 “ I will come into thy house, in the multitude of thy mercies and in thy fear will I
 “ worship towards thy holy temple,” and gives exhortation to it “ for he is thy Lord
 “ and worship thou him.” The establishment of it was to be so universal that the

Lord

* Exodus 23.

Lord declares by the prophet "it shall
 " come to pass that from one new moon to
 " another, and from one sabbath to another,
 " shall all flesh come to worship before
 me."* But though the appointment is di-
 vine, it may be subverted by falling under
 neglect, indifference, or formality. For-
 mality prepares for indifference, indifference
 for neglect, and neglect for subversion. In
 order that we may escape the influence of
 each, we should recollect *whose* institution
 we are called to regard, and for what end it
 was made. For, is it intended meerly to en-
 gage our notice, and employ our time? Is it
 not to do us good? Is it not the means by
 which we become enriched with grace, and
 prepared for glory? Is it not the medium
 through which our joint communion with
 the Father and his Son, and his people is sup-
 ported? Is it not that by which we express our
 dependance on God, and honour his name?
 In order that we may escape the influence
 of each, the public duty of prayer should
 be

* Isaiah lxvi. 23.

be more attended to by us, and be regarded as the most important part of our sacred exercise. But here we are very culpable. The ordinance of preaching seems to have swallowed up the duty of prayer, and if we may conclude from the regard paid to the one and the neglect shewn to the other; the business of the congregation seems to be more with man than God. Hence of the numbers now convened how many of you are come to hear, but how few to pray. Hence we hear so much, and pray so little. Hence meetings for prayer, though on the most emergent occasions, we think ourselves justified to neglect: but when a sermon is to be preached especially by a popular minister, we feel it an affliction to be obliged to be absent. But to worship God, and to hear of him are two different acts, though performed at the same time. If the latter is the greater attractive to us, or the whole motive of our coming to the house of prayer; and the former in our estimation is rather preparative to it, than the weightier part of our holy exercise—is there not reason to charge

charge ourselves with neglect? If we suppose prayer to be of importance, yet attend upon it without any devotedness of spirit, be more affected in the presence of man than of God, and give in our petition to Heaven with less seriousness and desire than we would put up a request to an earthly king—Is there not indifference in the act? Should we draw nigh to him with our mouths, and honor him with our lips, while our heart is removed far from him, and in the most solemn manner call forth his attention, when we never mean to regard his benefits—Is there not formality in the performance? Let us judge ourselves on this head, and “examine ourselves of what sort our work is.” Present neglect, or carelessness, or formality, may produce future apostacy. Or, not having given ourselves unto prayer, God may deny us his blessing, when we may be most sensible of our want, and cry to him with greater fervency than we are now disposed to use.

B

2d. We

2d. We must regard God himself as the proper object of our worship, and engage in it, desiring to honor him, and derive benefit from him. His majesty and mercy united, will excite our reverence, and draw out our desire. For, in all our addresses to the King of Glory, his goodness must not cause us to forget his greatness; nor should we injure his honor, by his condescension.

“ God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all who are about him.”* That which we should never lose sight of, thro’ the blindness of our mind, and the depravity of our nature, we are prone to neglect; and do not “ serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.”† An awful respect is frequently withheld, and a pert familiarity, unbecoming sinners, is indulged. For want of regarding him with a solemn awe we affect a light freedom; and forgetting that “ God is in Heaven, and we upon earth :
§ “ we

* Psalm lxxxix. 8.

† Heb. xii. 28.

“ we are rash with our mouths, and our
 “ hearts are hasty to utter any thing before
 “ the Lord.”† On this account “ ’tis of the
 “ Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, be-
 “ cause his compassions fail not.” Should
 he be extreme to mark what we have done
 amiss in this particular part of our conduct,
 exclusive of any thing else reprehensible,
 “ who of us could stand ?”

“ But there is mercy with him that he
 “ may be feared,” and while we respect his
 majesty, we must not be unmindful of his
 mercy. To seek is our duty and privilege;
 and if we are impressed with a sense of our
 sin and misery we shall be easily stirred up
 to the pursuit of it. To prevent our being
 unconcerned while we profess to make mer-
 cy the object of our desire, is the gracious
 design of God in the discovery of our con-
 dition, the conviction of the Spirit, and the
 visitation of his providence. These bring
 our sins to remembrance, and then the ne-
 cessity and importance of mercy is thought
 upon ; and the assurance that “ the eyes of

B 2

“ the

† Ecclef. v. 2,

“ the Lord are on them that hope in his
 “ mercy,” encourages us “ to give ourselves
 “ unto prayer.” When we thus “ draw
 “ nigh to him, he draws nigh to us,” and
 meets us with his promises. He speaks to
 us in terms which tend to counteract our
 fears, and inspire us with saving hope. 'Tis
 impossible for him to declare his grace with
 more confidence, or greater variety of lan-
 guage than he does. We are not excited to
 offer up our addresses to him, with a meer
 peradventure, or a “ who can tell if God
 “ will turn and repent, and turn from his
 “ fierce anger that we perish not.” Probabi-
 lity has great influence to stir up the soul
 when distress stares us in the face, but our
 encouragement is much greater—for, “ ask,
 “ and ye shall have ; seek, and ye shall find ;
 “ knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”
 “ For therefore will the Lord wait that he
 “ may be gracious unto you ; and therefore
 “ will he be exalted that he may have mercy
 “ upon you : for the Lord is a God of judge-
 “ ment, blessed are they that wait for him.”*

3d. We

* Isaiah xxx 18.

3d. We must preserve spirituality of frame in our worship. This will make us hearty in the act, and constant in the duty. We shall realize the divine presence, and conclude, "Surely God is in this place." Feeling our need, and believing the promise, we shall be led into deep pleadings with God, we shall "draw near, even to his seat, "and fill our mouth with arguments." Determined to meet with satisfaction and obtain success, we shall "know the words "which he would answer us, understand "what he will say unto us;" and "not "let him go except he bleſs us." Devoted in heart, the eye will be prevented from roving, the mind from wandering; and we shall conduct ourselves as in the presence, and under the view of God. We shall beware of meer pretence, by which the notice of men may be attracted, while the anger of God may be kindled.

"Tis lamentable that this is not more the case; for, while numbers neglect the house of God, how many are there who serve him

only with "that which is outward in the
 "flesh?" Did we consider that the eye of God
 is upon us, and that "he looketh to the
 "heart:"—Did we reflect that a spiritual
 worship is required, and discover, upon ex-
 amination of every duty, how carnal we
 have been—we should have reason to fear
 that God draws this conclusion at the end
 of every exercise, "in vain do they worship
 "me."

'Tis as unacceptable to God, as unpro-
 fitable to us, "that we draw nigh to him
 "with our mouths, and honor him with our
 "lips, while our hearts are far from him."*
 "God is a Spirit, and seeketh such to wor-
 "ship him, as worship him in spirit and in
 "truth." Those who have only the form,
 may shine more in the external perform-
 ance than those who have the power; but
 they are very unequally respected by God.
 To the former he declares, "when ye spread
 "forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from
 "you; yea, when you make many prayers
 "I will

* Isaiah xxix. 13.

“ I will not hear you.”* But to the latter,
 “ Let me see thy countenance, let me hear
 “ thy voice, for sweet is thy voice and thy
 “ countenance is comely.”† The one constitutes the glory of divine worship, the other renders it insignificant and unprofitable. Not that worship which is pompous, but sincere; not that which is bodily, but spiritual, is well pleasing to God. “ Lord save, or I perish;” or, “ God be merciful to me, a sinner;” uttered from a deep-felt sense of our need, will be received and successful, while a well-worded address, may be despised and rejected, because it is only verbal expression, not mental desire. ’Tis in vain to keep up outward ceremony, if our heart is not right before God; and if we are enabled to worship him in spirit and in truth, our service shall be owned, and however disregarded of men, “ we shall have
 “ our reward.”

When that universal revival and spread
 of religion shall commence, by which “ the
 B 4 “ earth

* Is. i. 15.

† Cant. ii. 14.

“ earth shall be filled with the knowledge of
 “ the Lord, as the waters cover the seas ;”
 we may expect to come nearer to the wor-
 ship of the inhabitants of the upper world,
 and more intimately partake of their joys.
 Before that eventful period 'tis more than
 probable, many congregations of worshippers
 will successively occupy this house. Those
 who at present use it, should be concerned
 to know that they are in the number of the
true worshippers, lest they should be repuls-
 ed when most sanguine about their accep-
 tance, and be denied admission into the
 company of those “ nations who are ap-
 “ pointed to worship God before the
 “ throne.” To excite in our breasts a suit-
 able desire and temper, for this holy and
 happy employ ; let us regard,

III. The gracious properties of the ob-
 ject of our worship, and the advantages we
 derive from them. Here I might descend
 to a variety of particulars, from the recital
 of, and enlarging upon which, you must
 excuse me, by pausing for a moment on
the

the Father.—This, my dear brethren, is a relation in which God stands connected with the whole universe, but more peculiarly to the subjects of divine grace, “who know God and are known of him.”

It implies his love, pity, tenderness, and care. His love was discovered in the highest instance. It can admit of no parallel in nature. Involved in the deepest misery, it has extricated us. We were captives, but he has redeemed us by a price which none but God could advance, and a power, which none but God could exert. He has renewed us by his grace, adopted us into his family, and made us heirs with Christ. Being “the sons, and daughters of the “Lord God Almighty,” he exercises his parental care over us. His eyes are upon us, and his ears are open to our cry. He has commissioned us to “cast all our care on him, “for he careth for us ;*” and to “cast our “burden upon him, and he will sustain us.†” So that if we “walk in darkness and have
“ no

* Peter v. 7

† Psalm lv. 22.

“no light, we can trust in the Lord, and stay
 “upon our God.” So that “if we endure
 “chastening God deals with us as with sons.”
 “Folly is bound up in the heart of his chil-
 “dren, but the rod of correction shall drive
 “it out.” So that if we live in an evil day,
 we may be “secure from the fear of evil;”
 or should we fall under the common cala-
 mity, we may plead the promise accomodated
 to the condition, and expect the accomplish-
 ment. For reasons best known to our heav-
 enly Father, we may be exercised with af-
 flictions, but we shall not be left to sink un-
 der them. We may be “perplexed, but
 “not in despair; persecuted, but not for-
 “saken; cast down, but not destroyed.”
 “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the
 “Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he
 “knoweth our frame, he remembereth that
 “we are dust.”* “If his children for-
 “sake his law, and walk not in his judg-
 “ments: if they break his statutes, and keep
 “not his commandments. Then will he
 “visit their transgression with a rod; and
 “their

* Psalm ciii. 13, 14.

“ their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless
 “ his lovingkindness will he not utterly take
 “ from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to
 “ fail.*” “ The Lord is merciful, and gra-
 “ cious, slow to anger, and plenteous in
 “ mercy. He will not always chide, nei-
 “ ther will he keep his anger for ever.”†
 Full of pity, he will grant us support, and
 consolations answerable to our need. His
 promise ever holds good; “ I will never leave
 “ thee nor forsake thee:” so that we may
 boldly say, “ the Lord is my helper, I will
 “ not fear.” Mountains may sooner depart
 from their fixed stations, and hills be re-
 moved from their bounds, than his loving-
 kindness cease, or his faithfulness fail. We
 can go no where from his presence, nor
 does he desire we should; and under his eye
 and wing we are secure and happy.

In some cases, he uses measures expressive
 of resentment, rather than care. But we
 should remember that resentment is often
 evidential of care, as inattention is of ne-
 glect.

* Psalm lxxxix. 30, &c.

† Psalm ciii. 8, 9.

glect. Were there no love in the heart of our God towards us, he would treat us with indifference—leave us to ourselves—and suffer us to enjoy the pleasures of the world without interruption, or mitigate our sorrows by the amusements common to unconverted men.—But no; if we belong to God he will turn every comfort into a cross, every blessing into a curse, and the water from which we expect the greatest refreshment shall be embittered, rather than his children shall perish. “He does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men:” he therefore asks his people of old, “Why will ye be stricken any more?” We little think how much our heavenly Father loves us, even while he severely strikes us, though we have such an evidence of it recorded by the prophet: “Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy on him, saith the Lord.”†

His

† Jeremiah xxxi. 20.

His kindness and fidelity, are best known when we most need them. In prosperity, we are not properly concerned for proof, of his gracious properties, and the benefits resulting from them ; but in seasons of adversity and distress we want instances of them, and “ we find him a very present help in every time of need.” As the weak sick child is most attended to, and meets with most expressions of parental indulgence ; so the Lord exercises peculiar tenderness over his afflicted children. He indulges them with brighter evidence, clearer manifestation, and stronger joy. They are admitted to intimacy, and allowed to deal familiarly with him ; so that they can say, “ thou shalt strengthen me upon the bed of languishing, and make all my bed in my sickness.”

We shall content ourselves at present by mentioning three advantages resulting from these gracious properties—Confidence—Present relief—and the assurance of future supply.

What

What comfort is there destitute of confidence? In the possession of well-grounded hope, the petitioner goes with pleasure to the object of address; and this is the confidence we have in our God, that "if we ask
 "any thing according to his will we know
 "he heareth us." To this end "we have
 "received the spirit of adoption, whereby
 "we cry Abba Father:" and can "come
 "boldly unto the throne of grace, that we
 "may obtain mercy, and find grace to help
 "in time of need." For the soul gets,—

Present relief. This makes the holy ordinance, whether in public or private, delightful. Answers to prayer lighten the burdens of the mind, and make us persevere. Present attainment excites expectation in future; nor shall it be disappointed.

For supplies shall follow. No tear shall drop unobserved; no distress shall pass unnoticed; no petition presented in submission to the Divine Will, shall be unanswered. We have a right to depend upon our
 father

father for temporals, spirituals, and eternal. The relation between a parent and child is near and tender; and what parent that has not renounced humanity, mould suffer a beloved child to want and perish, when it is in the power of his hand to relieve and save him. And "if ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him?"*

Upon a review of the subject, we learn

That in order to worship God as our Father, we must have the spirit of his Son. 'Tis only from his agency true worship can be rendered. He produces in believers a correspondency of disposition to the great object of worship. Whatever is offered without this, is but the homage of a slave, arising from a sense of greatness and necessity, not from choice or love. A worship that proceeds not from a willing disposition, will

* Matt. vii. 11.

will not admit of such nearness to God as the real christian enjoys. Many in the divine presence, we hope, are favoured with this privilege. You address your Father who is in Heaven, and are disposed to hallow his name by a reverence, connected with delight. There is, and there will be an interruption in your enjoyment; but as an evidence that you are capable of delighting yourselves in the service of God, the suspension of pleasure in his worship is the cause of your sorrow. The disorders the soul is incident to, and the indispositions under which the human frame labors, frequently deprive persons of delight in, and unfit them for, the worship of God, who have a disposition for it; and who, if their capacity was equal to their desire, would be like seraphs in the service of God. Where there is near relation connected with due affection, there will be attraction. You have love to God who are united to him, and the force of the attraction you are under discovers itself by your regard for his worship. For cannot you serve him
upon

upon principle? Is not this expressive of your experience? “ One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after : that I might dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.*” “ For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand : I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”† “ blessed are the people that are in such a case.” You will soon change your place, but not your employment, only you will worship without weariness, imperfection or end. If now you can turn to God and say, “ Lord, thou knowest all things ; I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honor dwelleth, your souls will not be gathered with sinners, nor your lives with bloody men.” God will receive you to himself, advance you to his temple above, that where he is, there his children may be also. His gracious properties recorded in his word, are not only descriptive of what he has been to his people

C

ple

* Psalm xxvii.

† Psalm lxxxiv. 10.

ple of old, but of what he is, and of what he will be to his children forever.

The worship of God does not consist in externals. Lip-service, and bodily exercise are no more useful than as they are expressive of the frame of mind : “ we may appear
 “ unto men to pray, we may come as his
 “ people come, and we may hear his word ;” which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and yet our persons and performance be rejected, for want of that sincerity and spirituality which are the necessary constituents of the christian character, the essential ingredients in gospel-worship. Know then what God requires and expects. Beware of deception. “ God
 “ searcheth the heart and the reins, and will
 “ render unto every man according to his
 “ work.” From henceforth we will hate carnality and hypocrisy, and every evil work. “ Search us, O God, and know our
 “ hearts, try us and know our thoughts, and
 “ see if there be any wicked way in us, and
 “ lead us in the way everlasting.” “ We are

§

“ the

“ the circumcision who worship God in the
 “ spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and
 “ have no confidence in the flesh. For he
 “ is not a Jew, who is one outwardly ; nei-
 “ ther is that circumcision, which is out-
 “ ward in the flesh : but he is a Jew, which
 “ is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that
 “ of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the
 “ letter, whose praise is not of men, but of
 “ God.”*

God is not confined. He is no respecter
 of places or persons, “ but in every na-
 “ tion he, that feareth God, and worketh
 “ righteousness, is accepted of him. There
 “ is now neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian,
 “ Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all,
 “ and in all. For in Christ neither circum-
 “ cision availeth any thing, nor uncircumci-
 “ sion, but faith which worketh by love.”
 It argues much ignorance when we would
 limit the Holy One of Israel “ to tem-
 “ ples made with hands ;” and when our
 bigotry and attachment to any particular
 C 2 society,

* Romans ii. 28, 29.

society, leads us to exclaim, "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we!" Nothing makes a people dear to God but their conformity to him; nor a place of worship sacred, but the divine presence. In point of external sanctity, all places are equal to Him, who hath said, "the Heaven is my throne, and the Earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."* O thou God of all grace, send out thy light and thy truth, that all may know thee, from the least even to the greatest. When the Jews shall be called in, with the fullness of the Gentiles, and when neither in this, nor that place only, shall men worship the Father, but all shall worship him in spirit and in truth.

Let

* Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2.

Let us bless God for revelation, and the extent of its discovery—for the predictions and promises yet to be accomplished—for the gospel which sounds in our ears—for the ordinances upon which we attend—for every convenience for his worship, and that “ we
 “ can sit under our own vine and fig tree,
 “ none daring to make us afraid. He
 “ hath not dealt so with any nation : and as
 “ for his judgments, they have not known
 “ them. Praise ye the Lord.* But
 “ blessed are your eyes, for they see ; and
 “ your ears for they hear ; for verily I say
 “ unto you, that many prophets and righte-
 “ ous men have desired to see those things
 “ which ye see, and have not seen them :
 “ and to hear those things which ye hear,
 “ and have not heard them.”†

This being the house of prayer, and the place where the attention of sinners is called to the living God, we have reason to bless the Providence by which it has been raised, and the expression of our gratitude must be
 enlarged

* Psalm cxlviii. 20.

† Matt. xiii. 16, 1 .

enlarged when we reflect upon the blessing and success that has attended the ministry of our honored, but afflicted friend, by whom a worshipping assembly has been collected; and for whose convenience this building has been erected. We by no means confine the Lord and his work to this house, or suppose the place has any holiness in it any more than 'tis dedicated to God, and appropriated to his service. 'Tis not built in opposition to our fellow christians of different persuasions, but to promote the common interest of christianity. The population of this respectable city increases, and with it, blessed be God, "the number of believers are multiplied." Should this house be one of the nurseries of Heaven, the end of its erection will be answered. We take it for granted, that the grace of God will prevent our fellow-christians from looking upon it with an envious eye, and lead them to pray for its prosperity; and that "if Christ is preached they rejoice, and will rejoice." To the lovers of catholicism, and those who regard the honor that cometh from God, it must

must be pleasing to find here a house where the minister of Christ may deliver what he has received from the Lord, though he does not chuse to appear under episcopal sanction. May the man of God through whose instrumentality it was first begun, and whose eyes see it occupied, live long to sound his Redeemer's praise therein, and find the fruit of his labors in the conversion of sinners, and increase of grace to all that believe.

F I N I S.

(cc)

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